

Redeeming a Lost Soul by Hyperdrive 24

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Summary: Billy? Recognition, fear, joy, terror. When their hands touched it all vanished. Eleven ripped the blindfold from her head, doubled over and threw up on the bed. "What happened?" Max begged. "Billy," el gasped retching. "Billy?" "Stuck," El wiped the blood from her nose. "He's stuck there with them." (re posted as the formatting previously was messed up)

1. Chapter 1

The end of Stranger Things season 3 was intense, but I miss Billy already. So I literally typed this on my phone. I also wanted to explore the characters as they might be older, and that little interesting moment of an intense connection between El and Billy. Don't tell me I'm the only one that noticed it.

Soft; the skin of her hand, light; the touch of her fingers, deep; the look in her eye, pain; the monster inside, pain; the wound, pain; the torn flesh. Sadness; his sister calling, confusion; the other's cries, darkness; the touch of her hand.

Heat. Burning heat. Get away! FLEE! ESCAPE! Clawing, screaming, running!

Billy didn't expect to wake up. Max his dear, pain in the ass, sister max was sobbing on that little twat she called a boyfriend. If she was over there... then who was crying on his chest? His head moved to look, pain cut through him; he stopped moving. The void came and swallowed him whole.

Waking into complete darkness was worse than dying. He had died, there was no doubt about that. The black blood was still soaking through his white shirt. The wounds had vanished though. Death must have something akin to a rejuvenating quality to it; fixing all the shit life did to your body. Slowly he sat, looking out into the void. There was no ground only some kind of water that he didn't sink through. Hell or purgatory? A dark chuckle made it's way up his throat. Wasn't that just perfect? The chuckle turned to a laugh then the laugh grew into something hysterical and disturbing. The laugh was choked off into heavy shuddering sobs, he collapsed into himself and screamed.

The silence was the worst part. He was used to being alone so the solitude did nothing, the quiet killed though. Sometimes he wandered, on and one forever, but nothing changed. Sometimes I screamed for someone, anyone to hear him and find him. Sometimes he sang rocks songs, pop songs, anything he could remember to keep himself sane. His mother's lullabies. Another thing about being

dead... you had all the time to kill in the universe. And you didn't sleep.

A rumbling chirping sound like breaking glass broke the silence. He froze. Danger. That was danger. Running, he ran as far as he could until the chill running down his spine making his hairs stand on end, stopped. You still breathed in death and he gasped out of air listening, hackles raised, a stray dog waiting for the fight.

The sound of the creature followed him for a timeless time. He ran on and on maybe years maybe days or seconds. It always found him... or there was more one...

1990

Five years since El lost her powers. Every day she sat with the TV tuned out, blindfolded and hoping to feel something again. Max was with her today. Mike had gone. They'd had a fight, they seemed to be having more of them these days. She couldn't let go not when she felt something was wrong. A niggling sensation at the back of her neck when she slept.

"El, are you sure about this?" Max worried her lower lip pressing a supportive hand to her best friends forearm.

"Yes" she nodded. "I feel something."

Max nodded then turned the TV volume up. El waited and waited. Shadows grew until they surrounded on all sides. She waited. Drip, drip, drip; the sound of water rippling water. She was almost there. Just a little more... bang!

"What's going on?" Mike came back staring at his girlfriend and her best friend both sitting in the living room. El took the blindfold off, throwing it to the ground, sprang to her feet, pushed past him, the slam of a door and the click of a lock.

Max stared at Mike, incredulously.

"Really?"

"What?"

"You're so dumb," she got up off the floor following in her friends wake. Leaving Mike to stare blankly at the empty room and blindfold on the floor.

"El?"

The door was opened. El moved back to let her in. She sat on the toilet lid glaring at her hands. "What's going on between you two?" Max sat on the edge of the bath.

"Doesn't understand," El's voice wavered dangerously. "It's so hard." "Hey come here," max wrapped her in a comforting hug.

The tap dripped water into the sink. They hadn't fixed it yet. El reached over to tighten the faucet. Her hand touched the metal, cold. Her fingers dipped into the water in the bowl. She frowned, closed her eyes.

The void opened. She was there! The endless black stretched out forever. El focused on finding someone. Mike swam into focus in the living room, grumbling to himself turning the TV off. She almost cried with joy before she heard the griping growl. Then she was ripped back into the bathroom gasping.

Max knew where she'd gone.

El kept it from Mike. She couldn't control it. She walked the line between two worlds slipping into one and out the other. She was shopping deciding between two brands of eggo's on the frozen foods lisle; the sound of splashing water, heavy breathing, frenzied, rushed past her. Spinning she dropped the food she was holding and stared down the aisle. There was no one there. Just her. The hair on her neck pricked 1, she rubbed at it. The fluorescent lights above flickered.

He stopped, gasping for breath. The afterlife was not what one would expect. It was hard, harder almost than being alive. At least there was no angry father raising a fist. Though now there was some kind of demon chasing him in the endless eternal dark. A flutter of something soft brushed up against his arm. Jerking back there was nothing there.

El stared at her arm. Touching the place she had felt something pass her. In the street people stared at her. She ran back home. Called Max. It would take a while for her to get there, and she needed to go now. She needed to look for them. The blindfold was secured. The TV turned on and tuned out. She sat waiting.

Running running, all he ever did was run. It always managed to find him, though he never saw it. Only ever hearing the chirping growl.

He collapsed to his knees. Who would have thought that dying would be so hard? If someone had told him he wouldn't have done it. He didn't even know the girl he had died for. She knew him though, she knew his past his mother, his cruel inescapable father.

"She was really pretty," that little girl had cried for him. She understood, there was no pity only endless sorrow.

The monster was back, he growled and pushed his legs into working. He stopped; listened, a scream echoed around him, he was the only one here wasn't he? The scream echoed through the abyss a second time. The monster was also changing, chasing the sound. He had to get there before it! Flinging himself into darkness until his legs stumbled into jelly and he dragged himself up again. He'd been alone for so long, so, so long he needed to keep this person safe, whoever they were, he needed them. He shouted out screamed at them to move towards him.

Something was wrong, terribly wrong. El couldn't get back, Max was shaking her screaming but it made no difference; her friend remained lost.

El was screaming she was calling for someone. But not Mike. No it wasn't Mike. Mike stood in the doorway white as snow.

Another sound ripped through the abyss, reaching her over the void. "Hey! Hey I'm here come to me! PLEASE!" The voice begged, the caller was known to her but not for a long time. She ran towards them screaming back; begging for them to find her. She saw him fading from the shadow into the light. White shirt covered in black blood, wild curly hair, tight pants, and black boots. She reached out, please she thought, please reach me.

Mike ripped the blindfold off her and she whirled forwards onto her hands and threw up on the carpet.

"Why!" She screamed into Mike's ashen face. "Why did you bring me back!"

"El-"

"He's lost! I almost had him! And you-"

El quivered with rage sobbing, crying. Max was there holding her. El was a wreck clinging to her. Whining; a wounded animal.

"Sssh, it's okay."

"Noooo," she moaned.

Billy reached the place he saw the flicker of a person fade into nothing. They were gone and he was alone again. He crumbled, something inside cracked and shattered on the ground of his soul. He didn't want to be alone. He didn't want to be alone. Not anymore.

Mike had hidden the blindfold; she was using a torn up old t-shirt. The bedroom door was locked; the radio was buzzing in the background. She called max; she was the only one that listened to her right now. Max sat on the end of the bed, biting her nails, nervous. A deep breath and the sound drowned out then faded into nothing. The blackness of the Other Place consumed and stretched out. El, closed her eyes and waited. Heavy laboured breathing, running, screaming. She ran in that direction. A chill ran down her spine. Demigorgon, a voice whispered. Maybe he wouldn't see her? How should she let him know she was there?

"BILLY!" the scream echoed impossibly in the distance.

The scream of his name stopped him as effectively was a bullet. He veered off, sprinting. When he saw her clear from the black standing in bright yellow pyjamas brown hair a halo around her head. She must have been an angle. Then she cleared into complete focus. He could have been crying from joy or fear. It was her. The girl he died with. But she was alive? She didn't die with him? No but she'd walked this place before. He'd seen her when he had been inside his head.

Billy? Recognition, fear, joy, terror. When their hands touched it all vanished.

Eleven ripped the blindfold from her head, doubled over and threw up on the bed.

"What happened?" Max begged.

"Billy," el gasped retching.

"Billy?"

"Stuck," El wiped the blood from her nose. "He's stuck there with them."

That was the last straw; she turned to smoke before he could hold her. He roared collapsing and slamming his fists into the water. He didn't care if the monster got him. Let them come, he had given up. He rolled onto his side and cried.

"Have to go back!"

"Okay El, but why are we filling the bath with salt?"

"I need more power, this, conductor," El climbed into the bath as the last bag of salt was poured in.

The chirping growl was close now. He heard the splash of water. This was it, his last moments for eternity and he couldn't even bring himself to look the thing in the face.

Soft; hand brushed his cheek. Looking up expecting a monster; he saw her. She still had the yellow pyjamas on. His hand snapped out and wrapped around her wrist she was solid. Solid and real. So, so beautifully real. He sobbed pulling her towards him. She hugged him back; pity the poor man. Eyes opening and the void vanished. Replaced by a bathroom a bathtub smelling of salt and a ginger teenager, staring at him.

"Billy?"

Pain exploded and he fell into the arms of the brown angel.

Mike was angry. He yelled lots when he was angry. El didn't understand, she'd brought Billy back, he was safe. Why was Mike angry? She cried slamming the door in Mike's face. She'd missed doing that without touching the wood. Billy lay in the bed. Mike was smashing his fist into the door demanding to be let back in. Silent tears fell from her and she shivered with the emotions raging inside. Billy was the same age as when he died. They were the same age now. Odd being the same age as someone older than you are. El sat by his bed reached out to him with her mind. It was all mixed up, broken pieces scattered everywhere she went. She picked up what she could and pieced things back together. A photo on a mantelpiece. A glass on a table. Shoes on a rack. She found him like always, in his room eight years old huddled against his bed, head in his knees

crying for his mum. She went to him and gathered him close in a hug.

Tell me... do you want more?

2. Chapter 2

Hi, a much requested second chapter for you lovely people. Enjoy.

Chapter 2

Mike placed the living room. Will watched his friend go back and forth, sparing tense glances at the bedroom door. Behind that door was an unpredictable threat, and their best friend had been locked in the same room as it for hours now. Lucas sat on the sofa opposite the bedroom door with Max. They were all tense; El had been trying to wake Billy up for two days now but the man remained comatose. She'd been oddly protective of the former school bully, charmer and tormentor. More recently known as the flayed body for the Mindflayer.

"We should just take him to the hospital," Lucas said for the tenth time that afternoon, jittering his knee impatiently.

"And explain how my brother miraculously came back to life?" Max scoffed, folding her arms

"Well," Will spoke up drawing everyone's attention to him, "we don't have to say he's your brother. We could have just found him?" He looked hopefully around the room, searching for agreement.

They all seemed to think about it then Mike added his opinion

"He's been over there for five years, we don't even know if it's still Billy." He frowned. "He could be dangerous."

"Oh just listen to yourself," Max snapped jumping to her feet.

"Max," Lucas tried to calm the building ire of his girlfriend.

"No!" She rounded on them all. "El said he was running away from something! That he was begging for someone to find him! I'm not leaving him alone caged like some monster!"

"The Mindflaye-"

"Fuck the Mindlayer!"

It was this moment when the bedroom door opened with a slow creak and an exhausted El tapered out. Mike instantly went to her, before being waved off by an impatient wave of the hand; sometimes his constant fussing when she used her powers was just plain annoying. The armchair protested with a loud squeak with the weight of El sagging into it.

"How is he?"

"How are you?"

Mike and Max collided with their questions glaring at each other. El gave both of them a withering look.

"He's asleep. I'm fine," the last part was directed pointedly towards her boyfriend. "He won't wake up," she looked haunted, dark circles under her eyes, pale cheeks, a fine sheen of sweat on the forehead. "Inside is all broken."

"What does that mean?" Will looked at the closed bedroom door. El shrugged helplessly frowning at the floor.

He was alone again. The girl had gone, she was nice. His dad wasn't nice. He missed his mom. A glass smashed downstairs, he flinched. He really missed his mom. The house was messy, broken glass, smashed pictures, his room was turned over. His cheek stung; the slap of a father's fist. Curling, smaller and smaller, willing to vanish, become nothing, too small to be seen.

Pain; his claws ripping through skin. Darkness; aching solitude, lullabies. Hope; outlines of a girl. Rocking back and forth Billy whined painfully, he wanted to be free again. He was just a kid. Wait. No. Not a child anymore, a grown boy. Strong, handsome, no one messed with him. Wait, those kids messed with him. His little sister and the other shits. Things were fine until they came along. A growl; it came from him. Anger; had to find them, show them who's in charge. Dark satisfaction broken by the sound of a yell. Dad was angry. Quick, don't draw attention.

Comforting; a hand on his cheek. Starburst of colour red yellow and blue, fire, explosions, burning up! Fight; protect the girl! Save them all! Fireworks. Save her; the understanding. Freezing; deaths grip pulling, pulling. Him TARING INTO HIS BODY, RIPPING APART!

Billy gasped, memories returning. Death, the other place, that weird fucking girl El.

"Billy?"

A voice. He looked up, no one.

"Billy can you hear me?"

Standing, he walked around his room. The noise downstairs fading, fear of the father receding. His fingers tingled. Looking down there was nothing, but he felt. Oh how he felt. You know when your arm falls asleep, and you try and move it, but it doesn't feel like yours? It was like that. A strange thing. The sensation, the shape of a hand he neither saw nor knew. Recognized though. He'd been touched by this phantom hand before. Fingers wrapped around fingers. They were warm.

El and Max sat either side of the bed Billy lay in. From the outside he looked peaceful but El felt a tense electric, energy running under the skin when she touched him. Billy's hand lay palm up, El's hand holding it softly. The other hand held by Max, tenderly caressed by a thumb across knuckles.

"How is he even here?" Max spoke softly, staring at the face of her older brother. "We buried his body, but he's here." She brushed moisture from her cheeks, sniffing.

El stared intensely at the relaxed face of the once cruel man.

"Lots we can't explain," El decided on. "Upside down, shouldn't be possible but it is and I opened it."

"Maybe-" Max stopped herself.

"What?"

"Maybe you did this? Gave him his body back?" She looked hopeful, she really wanted this to be the work of the psychic girl, the alternative was too unsettling to consider.

Billy lay, motionless, lifeless apart from the pulse beat in his throat. There seemed to be no breath in or out. El shook her head very slightly. She didn't do this. It wasn't her power. A body like the old one in every way apart from the old one was dead. The soul was the same old one though. Battered, warn, torn to shreds; tormented. An idea, a half formed fear had El reaching her hand over, covering Billy's eyes.

"What are you doing?" Max was worried looking between the hand over her brother's eyes and El's closed ones.

"Checking,"

Max watched, a small river of blood flowed along El's upper lip. Her eyes screwed up, sweat glistened on skin.

The void opened up, she woke gazing into darkness, wandered through water, to a door. Opening the door and stepping through to the front room of a family home. A man shitting in a chair, a bottle in hand.

"Billy get your ass down here!"

Bad papa. Anger; papas shouldn't hurt.

A shiver up the spine. El turned, the stairs went up, a man stood at the top, staring. Not kind eyes, not Billy's eyes in Billy's head.

Hello again.

A scream, a shattering scream, running, laughter pursuing. Door opening, collapsing on vines. El looked up. Red sky stretching on and on. Black storm clouds. Red lightening flashes, a black shadow moving in the distance. The storm grows, higher, faster, stronger pulling, reeling her in closer. Another scream, it's her's.

The wall cracked under the force of El flying across the room into it. Max leapt up and ran to her friend.

"El!"

The girl slithered down the wall into a heap on the floor, curling up and sobbing.

Max tried to get her to come out of her ball. What on earth was happening? Her brother lay, corpse-like on the bed. Finally the shivering stopped. Quivering El got up, gripping Max's arms so hard her hands turned white.

"Mindflayer," she sobbed. "Still in him!" El's expression was frantic, eyes blown wide with urgency and distress.

Max grabbed El, dragging them from the room, the door slammed behind them. El shivered, remembering the feeling that had consumed her; cold hands gripping her insides, pulling, ripping.

Billy, oh poor Billy. What was going on inside there? Save him? Yes. How? No way how...

El moaned, feeling pain. Not her's, someone else's...

Billy stared at his reflection. It was wrong... he was only a little boy, tiny, insignificant, useless, powerless. A man stared down; curly, long hair, leather jacked over white vest. Powerful, confident. The man smiled down at him. He was scary; eyes black.

What are you doing Billy?

The words purred vibrating bones under skin.

"I don't know... who?"

Frowning, backing away.

I'm you.

Reflection shimmering, focusing, sudden clarity.

"No you're not..."

confusion, denial. No, not him, some else, something else.

I am now. I'm here to help.

Luring, power, flowing, shimmering the air.

"Help?"

Fear, cold sinking fear.

That girl is dangerous. Shadows flowing out, encircling ankles flowing up his body.

"She's nice"

trying to break free, the shadows! Too strong! Help! HELP!

No! She's bad Billy Bad.

Shadows gripping choking!

"Stop!"

Crumbling down, hands over ears, blocking out the voice. Can't see it, it will go away.

Billy.

"No!"

Darkness.

Everyone was gathered in the living room. El nursing a lump on her head with an ice pack, Mike furious, Max concerned, Will quiet, Lucas frantic, Dustin planning.

"We have to contain him." Mike finally spoke.

"Yeah but how?" Lucas replied, " remember the last time? He bust out!" He searched all of their faces for any sign of remembering the catastrophic event.

"We'll make it better!" Mike snapped.

"Not to be unhelpful but he's not going anywhere right now?" Max

glared at them.

"Also he doesn't look very dead. How does that work?" Will hesitantly glanced at everyone in the room.

"Billy is not being caged like an animal." Max stepped between the boys and the bedroom door.

"You're awfully protective of the bastard that was a shit to you!" Lucas shot back

"He died for us! He's my brother!" Max got up in her boyfriend's face snarling.

Soon enough there was an argument, yelling, chaos and insults were thrown.

"Shut up!" The mirror dissolved into a million shards. All heads turned to El, getting to her feet fast enough to make the air move. The air tingled with electricity, her expression dark; commanding.

The second sound of shattering glass had all heads turning to the door behind Max. A moment where nothing moved. Then a flurry of movement; dashing in all at once to see an empty bed, the curtains fluttering in the late afternoon breeze...

Hot; too hot! It was too hot! Cold; needs to be cold. He likes it cold.

Bike's raced down the road, six hell riders tearing up the road searching.

"Do you not like sense him or something?" Dustin demanded.

Both El and Will glared at him.

"Okay, we split and cover more ground." Mike ordered pulling on the breaks.

"Can I just ask the obvious, why are we on our bikes when we can drive?" Lucas pointed back the way they came.

"What use is a car if he's in the woods?" Dustin pointed out snidely

"Point."

"I go with Max," El veered her bike, she'd finally got for Christmas last year, towards the ginger 19 year old.

"Hey-" Mike was stopped by Will wheeling over to him and patting him on the arm.

"Better move quickly yeah?"

They split without much more discussion.

The trees on the side of the road moved in the wind. Leaves parting and shifting. A figure stepped out into the empty road, head turning left, right, a cruel grin. Billy cracked his neck, fingers flexing. The fun was starting.

So, there is a second chapter. I dont know how frequently I'll update but I'm aiming for this to be about a ten chapter long story. But who knows what these characters will make me do! This chapter is a tiny bit shorter than the one before. Sorry about that. I also might take another look at the first chapter and flesh it out more.

Reviews, I love reading them! Please tell me your thoughts.

3. Chapter 3

So this chapter jumps around with timelines, completely deciding to not go in the direction I was intending. But the characters had their own ideas. And this is the result. I hope that you like it.

1988

El stared horrified, as Max showed her pictures in a biology textbook.

"This-?"

"You're seriously telling me that you and Mike haven't-?"

"We've, k-kissed."

"Uh-huh," Max turned the page. El snatched it peering closer.

"That's,"

"Disgusting?"

El burst out laughing, flushing from her neck to her ears. "Yes!"

They both laughed for ten minutes straight, their mirth was so loud that Joyce Byers poked her head into the room.

"Everything alright girls?" She smiled, then raised an eyebrow at the open page of the biology textbook.

They tried to contain their senseless giggles and say everything was perfect. However the constant sniggering gave them away more than the open textbook.

Joyce chuckled, smiling fondly at them both.

"Okay," she managed to speak over her own laughing "if you have any questions about how babies are made come find me," she winked then closed the door.

There was a pause in the laughter where Max and El, stared at each other, raised the eyebrows, then burst into another fit of hilarity.

"So," El finally managed, "this is nice for people?" She pointed at a picture of a man and woman embracing closely.

"Well yeah," Max shrugged "otherwise no one would do it right?"

"Right?" El tilted her head scrutinizing, "it looks... awkward."

"It's... yeah it's awkward the first time definitely." Max shrugged.

El's eyes almost bugged comically.

"You've done-! You-"

Max took pity on her, placing a hand on her arm.

"Yeah Lucas and I have."

El turned bright pink shifting awkwardly.

"Yeah but there is another side to it that boys try and keep hidden from us girls, however! I found these magazines in Billy's room when I was younger," she announced hauling a pile of what must have been twenty magazines onto the duvet.

El opened one of them and the centre fold poster page opened, showing a topless woman posing on a car. El pulled a face turning the pages with growing morbid curiosity. Wretching at some explicit pictures and turning others to different angles when she couldn't understand them.

"I don't even want to know what my brother did with girls." Max shuddered with a grimace.

"You mean Billy did-" El gestured to the diagrams on the page of the forgotten biology textbook, illustrating the human reproductive process. Max looked at her incredulously.

"Well, yeah. Lots of times I imagine," she observed with a nonchalant shrug.

El gawked at her, blush returning with a vengeance.

"Lots of times..." she muttered. Unbidden the image of Billy embracing a faceless woman popped up in her mind, and she shook her head vigorously, banishing the image.

A sniff from Max, brought El's attention back to her. She was clutching the magazines with a scantily clad women on the cover, tears rolling down her chin as she gnawed into her bottom lip.

El moved over, snaking an arm around her shoulders, drawing her in.

"I don't know why," Max sobbed into El's shirt, "but I always thought that he'd give me the awkward 'talk' about all of this stuff." She shuddered clutching to El. She soothed the red hair of her friend. Looking down at the covers there was a note in sprawling chicken scratch writing. "Touch this and you die Max!" The corner of her mouth twitched up.

A sneaky tear fell from El's eye. She'd kept the speech her dad, Hopper, had written and never used. The folded and worn edged paper lay safe between the pages of her diary. What she would give to have her dad have that awkward, essential talk with her. She hugged Max tighter.

Joyce poked her head into the room again later to find both girls embraced and in tears. She coaxed them out and down into the living room. El looked up, wiping at her eyes with the back of her hand and saw Will, her new brother, sitting at the table, with a layout she hadn't seen him with for a while. The Dungeons and Dragons board was set, the book open in front of him. Wearing his purple wizard's hat and grinning sheepishly.

"Do you two want to play?"

They burst out into fond laughter, the whole family, even Jonathan, plus Max gathered at the table and prepared their character sheets. It was a good evening; filed with adventure and magic. A welcome distraction from the people they'd lost.

When they were all sagging in front of the TV watching Alien,

gasping and covering their eyes behind pillows; El leaned over to Will and asked.

"Didn't you get rid of your things?" She pointed at the not finished campaign left on the dining room table. It had turned into a saga, and now they had to continue it tomorrow.

"Yeah, but, I wanted to introduce you to it at least once." He nudged her with a shy smile.

"So you bought it again?" Her brown eyes lighted with soft affection. He looked sheepishly at his socks, shrugging and nodding.

"Yeah, did you like it?" as if he had to ask? They'd just played three hours straight and their ribs still hurt from the experience.

"Yes," she nudged him back before they were hushed by Max at the part of the movie, sagorny weaver burned the Alien's nest.

They shared a grin then turned they attention back to the movie.

1989

"Joyce?"

The mother of two looked up from under the leaking sink. El stood by the door wringing her hands a book tucked under an arm.

"What's up?" Joyce smiled wiping her hands off on her dungarees. El approached her, placing the human biology book on the table and opening it to a dog eared page. Joyce peered down at it, her eyebrows shooting up. "Do you want to know about the menstrual cycle?"

El shook her head briefly. No. What then? Joyce watched El fidget, waiting patiently.

"I've read it all, but it- I've..." her expression was worried, concerned.

"What is it sweetie?" Joyce placed a motherly hand on her shoulder and squeezed.

"I've never bled," El looked up searchingly into her eyes, "it doesn't say why I've not bled."

"Oh, well," Joyce prepared her thoughts for explaining things as best as she could. "extreme stress at a young age can either trigger the cycle to start early, or to start later in life," looking into El's pleading gaze, she smiled. "And after what you went through as a kid I'm not that worried, neither should you, that it's not come along."

"So I'm normal?"

"Never normal," Joyce grinned. El managed to crack a smile in return.

1990- present

The sun was setting on the horizon, turning the sky into a kaleidoscope of colours. They couldn't find him. Billy had vanished. No traces found for a week, had everyone on edge. The walkies were going off non stop, relaying and asking for updates on situation Gandalf the White; Dustin gave it that name. Mike and Will had even debriefed their siblings on the situation long before they usually would seek out the help of the young adults.

They all returned to Will's house. One would have thought that going on holiday to see one of your best friends would be fun, fantastic! Not this summer; this summer was growing to be like that summer five years ago; traumatizing, nightmare inducing, riddled with grief and regret...

Dustin replaced the receiver, after saying goodbye to Steve Harrington. He was always handy, if not for a fist fight then for general entertainment, he was also the 'not designated', designated, father of the whole group, according to the children anyway. Though, none of them were children really, not anymore. Growing up, and puberty did things to you. Complicated hormonal things. Max had blossomed years ago into a wonderful woman, tall, elegant, and full of fire. All of the boys were still skinny and gangly, just a heck of a lot taller. Funnily enough, Will had filled out the most drastically in that way, closer to his brother's build. Dustin... was still short, he'd changed the least.

"Captain hair is on the way," Dustin grinned at them all. "And he's bringing the bat."

"He still has that thing?" Lucas whistled. Max grinned, remembering slamming the homemade weapon into the floor between Billy's legs on Halloween. The smile faded though, a dark shadow of the present circumstances taking its place.

Billy was nowhere to be found, not only that, but there were no strange reports, no one missing, no strange deaths, the world was perfectly normal. And that was terrifying.

"What do you think he's doing?" Max looked out if the window, the sky was fading.

"Building another army I expect," Dustin shrugged slouching into the chair.

"It's not right," Nancy paced the living room notebook in hand, going over her findings from an afternoon of calling all the contacts relevant in the phone book, it was useful to have a reporter in the family. "I've not found anything,"

"Wait!" Jonathan stopped her hand from turning the page. "What's that?"

"Just some warehouse, they had a gas leak and shut down." She shrugged.

"Look at the date,"

"A week ago. You don't think?" She looked up at him.

"What kind of warehouse?" Will spoke up from the table. El looked over at the page.

'Jackson's frozen goods, shut down due to gas leak'

"He likes it cold," El muttered locking eyes with her adoptive brother.

"We can't just go running in half cocked," Dustin piped up from the table where he sat and tried to reason with them. Everyone was

rushing around, gathering weapons and supplies. No one paid attention to him. "Guys!" Slamming his hands down all movement ceased. Dustin heaved a breath. "Let's at least wait until Steve gets here, which should be tomorrow, and we can do some more digging into the warehouse, capeesh?" Reluctantly people started putting guns back where they belonged, wait... was that a flamethrower Max had?!

Take out was decided to be a very good idea so everyone went out to buy food. The Chinese was the destination El believed, though, she felt more like a curry. Joyce was cleaning kitchen, she too knew about the whole situation and wasn't very happy about it. She'd insisted that El stay home that evening; no telling what could happen with the old evil back in their world. Mike stayed as a result.

El and Mike stayed in her room, chatting for a while then the first kiss of the evening was pressed to her lips and it descended into a deep and heavy desperate embrace.

Something strange had been happening lately. El had been shying away from touches by her boyfriend, it was like pushing the same sides of the magnet together. She simply avoided the contact; feeling constricted by it. Ignoring it though was doing her no good, she tried to engage more, but it just felt wrong every time, but she was certain she loved him. Yes they loved each other and he was amazing, he made her feel safe.

Apart from when he touches you. A small voice spoke.

Dragged back to the here and now El was in a whirlwind things were happening faster than she could keep up with, she was laying on her back, Mike above her, their kisses had changed, or the intensity behind his had. When she felt a hand on the bare skin of her stomach, her eyes napped open.

"Mike, stop," she murmured hoping he'd hear her. The hand moved up taking her top with it. "Stop!" Mike jerked back and toppled off the end of the bed.

"The hell El?" He appeared rubbing his head, "did you need to use your powers?"

"I said stop,"

"And I heard you," He groused coming to sit on the end of the bed, "Geeze."

"But you didn't stop," her voice trembled, she didn't know why.

"I didn't get chance before you hurled me across the room," Mike replied rubbing the back of his head tenderly.

"I asked twice," she drew in, knees to chest, arms around knees; shield.

"What?" He winched.

"I asked twice," El said again a little louder.

"No you didn't-"

"I did!" The two words burst from her sharply. Cutting him off, mouth snapping shut with an audible 'clack'.

"I don't get it," he shook his head shifting to face her. Seeing the way she was curled in on herself.

"Didn't like it," El's mumbled explanation floated across the empty air, turning it stale.

"Why?" It was all he could think of to say. He searched her.

"I don't know, it didn't feel special." And it was making her breathing quick, tremors shuddering up from her thighs. Wrong thing to say.

"Not special? I thought- what have we been doing then!" His sudden outburst jolted El into hyper awareness. Fight or flight. She'd never been one to run.

"What?..." her voice was low, dangerous.

"If none of this has been special I don't understand what it is we have been doing El! What's with you lately?" Apparently Mike didn't notice the danger he was in. This was a bad place to be. El straightened up,

jumping off the bed, towering over him, trembling.

"What's with me?! What's with you!"

"Me?"

"Yes!"

"There's nothing wrong with me!"

"You're being impatient!"

"I'm impatient! You're the one that is being all closed off!"

"Am not!"

"Yes! Yes you are! You're pushing me away! Ever since your powers came back you've been distant, I thought that if we spent more time together that you'd stop pushing me away! Yeah maybe we just needed to be closer and I thought that you wanted-" he gestured vaguely between them both.

"Wanted? What?" El bit out.

"To- you know!"

"Have sex? Make children? Be felt and feel? We've not talked about any of that!"

"But you've been giving all these signs!"

"What signs!"

"Don't be silly you know!" He sighed with exasperation.

"I don't!" El roared.

"Aaagghh! Just-!" He sprang to his feet their situations now reversed as he looked down at her.

"Just what?!" He was poked violently in the chest, forcing him a step back.

"Do as you're told for once!" He roared back. The scream she unleashed rang in his ears, red filter coming over her vision, lashed out. Mike was propelled out of the door by an invisible force. Everything overflowed at once. All pent up insecurities exploding.

"GET OUT! GET OUT!"

The door slammed shut, and El let out another scream, confusion, fear, anger, a picture frame flew across the room smashing against the wall and shattering glass. Throwing herself onto her bed ripping at the covers, a sobbing mess.

"You alright honey?" Joyce tapped on the door hovering before entering her adoptive daughter's bedroom. She'd heard the argument, Mike storming down the stairs and the slam of the door.

The girl's face looked up, eyes puffy streaked with tears, snot and blood from her nose. "Oh honey," she cued moving to the bed. "Can I?"

El nodded shuffling over so Joyce could fit next to her on the bed and wrap her in her arms. "What happened?" El sobbed harder, face buried in the soft jumper Joyce wore.

"Oh honey," Joyce murmured stroking her hair, petting her like she'd done with her two boys when they were little. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"Hu- hurts too much-," El moaned out.

"Ssshhh, okay honey, don't worry, I'm here.

The next team meeting was tense. El and Mike keeping as much distance between them as possible. Mike's posture hunched hands buried deep in his pockets.

The next morning was tense. Steve entered the house, the air ripe and tingling with what he could only guess was some sort of a lovers quarrel. That and judging by the fact that El and Mike constantly stayed as far away from each other as possible.

"Ookay," Steve observed, "what crawled up your asses and died?" He

was not in the mood for teenage hormonal drama today.

"Nothing," Mike shrugged violently.

"Uh huh," Steve was unconvinced but followed the order of the day. "So give me the details that you refused to tell me over the phone," he turned to Dustin, "or did you just call me all the way out here for no reason other than you missed me, and if that was the case I'm—"

"The Mindflayer is back and he brought Billy back with him."

"Okay, wait? What?" He stared at them all. "Seriously?"

They all nodded.

"Any leads?" He turned automatically to Nancy and Jonathan.

"One, but so far it seems to fit," Nancy placed the notebook in front of Steve, pointing at the abandoned warehouse mentioned.

"Frozen goods warehouse, bingo," Steve pushed back from his chair, smoothing back his gravity defying hair and reached for his car keys. "I take it the nerds have come up with a plan?" He nodded at the teenagers"

All six grinned at him before spreading a large sheet of paper over the table.

"So," Dustin began, "we're, going to infiltrate."

Two cars pulled up outside the abandoned warehouse, it loomed above them, empty, hollow and ominous. The gates were closed and heavily padlocked with a thick chain.

"Well that's not creepy at all," Steve slammed his driver's door shut.

"Where's your sense of adventure gone?" Dustin grinned at him.

"It's not gone, I'm just cautious," he popped the boot rummaging for a moment, coming out with a wicked looking baseball bat, nails sticking out of it at all angles. Dustin nodded at the weapon.

"You know I've missed that,"

"Uh huh," Steve adjusted his grip a few times. He looked over to the other car, Nancy was loading a handgun testing the sight, Jonathan loaded a hunting rifle slinging it over his shoulder expertly. What made him blink a few times in surprised shock was Will, little Will Byers, though not so little anymore, easily lifting a double barrelled shotgun from the boot, loading it and snapping the barrels back into place, slinging a belt of ammunition over his torso. "You kids are scary you know that?" Steve said. Then he looked over to Lucas stretching his sling shot, Mike hovered looking extremely awkward with no weapon before El shoved a chain in his hands so he was useful. Okay maybe not all of them were scary. He noted how El didn't let her hand touch Mike's, strange, something definitely happened there. Where was that little redhead...

"The shit! Is that a flamethrower?!"

Max patted the weapon.

"Yup," grinning manically. He'd almost forgotten that they were a group of high school science nerds, of course they knew how to make a flamethrower.

The warehouse was cold, their breath hung visibly in the air. The mouldy stench of things rotting, rose and they breathed as shallowly as was possible without passing out. They moved in v formation Max headed the point a small flame burning at the tip of the flamethrower igniting it to burn light into corners and crevices filled with too much shadow. Jonathan and Nancy walked at the rear, Steve on Max's right, Will to the left. Mike next to Will, and Lucas next to Steve. El and Dustin in the middle.

Systematically making their way through the warehouse, jumping at any and all sounds, Dusting tripped over a plank of wood cursing up a storm, which then made Lucas scream, and then triggered Mike to scream and so on. It ended with Steve kicking Dustin in the shin.

"Do any of you have an idea what infiltration means!?" He hissed angrily.

All of the younger generation looked shamefully down towards their shoes. A guttural noise of distaste came from the bat wielding man as he turned away.

"Ssh," Max waved them to be quiet. Something was up ahead. Everyone froze.

The warehouse opened up into a cavernous space and kneeling alone in the centre of the room, Billy. With the click of three guns all aiming at him, he slowly turned. A grin; the flashlights flickered, the flex of shoulders, the spreading of fingers. Chaos.

Black smoke enveloped the entire space; choking out all light and sound. A gun fired next to her ear, deafening. A yell; terrifying. Struck; winded, pain across her head. Flung; pain in her back. Ripping; gash blood. Can't see! Need to see! Opening mouth to scream; hand clamping down, staunching sound. Ice up the spine; smell of death.

Hello El

1984

Something strange came to life in her chest, staring at the man before her. Heart beating fast, not from terror, no it was something else. She glared him down all the same.

"El," rolling his tongue over his teeth as he spoke her name. His eyes blazed to life, burning a fire within. Something twisted, coming to life within her gut, making her uncertain.

1990- present

A scream, nails scraping down a chalk board, the hand leaving her throat. A battle cry. Fire.

El coughed and wheezed. Air returning to her lungs. Max, wielding the flamethrower Billy screaming. Arms under hers lifting her up and away. Yells, shouts, someone asking if she's okay. A shadow rising from Billy's body, a voice in her head. A gunshot.

Help me

A moment, blue eyes clear as the night they died staring into a soul. El raised a hand. Never leaving Billy's gaze. Time slowed and slowed until it stood still and it was just them. The emotion in those haunted blue eyes changed.

RUN

El screamed, blood flowing from her nose, the ceiling collapsed inwards, shattered pieces of the roof falling to the place Billy had been. They all ran. Tears, she was crying.

El swiped furiously at them, blinking to clear her vision. Max was trying to talk to her. She felt sick, didn't want to talk. Curling into a ball on the backseat, breathing fast, stuttering, she shut down.

"Hey hey! She okay?" Steve swerved a tight bend in the road.

"I don't know!" Max shook her friend but there was no response. El stared into space, white, almost grey, not nothing to wipe the blood from her upper lip. Will was leaning out of the window in the front passenger seat shotgun aiming at the road behind them. No one flowed. Jonathan's horn blasted from the car ahead. Nancy also hanging out of the window, handgun trained on the road.

She wasn't coming put of her room, she'd locked the door an hour ago and refused company. Max came back from trying to get her to open up.

"She was really shaken," the redhead sat down next to her boyfriend curling into his side.

"I'm worried about that kid," Steve looked up the stairs.

The night spread over the room, shadows creeping into all the empty spaces. A cluttered desk, overflowed with books and discarded clothes. Small items from places visited on family holidays. El sat on her bed. The yellow pyjamas only just looking as though they have been put on in a human fashion. Fingers played with the frayed ends of a quilt, tugging, pulling and unravelling. Staring into nothing, trying to shut out all noise, she just wanted the noise to stop! Everything was so loud the clock, people downstairs, her breathing.

El closed her eyes, willing the world to stop, to fade away. The hallowed put part of her chest gaped like an open wound. She tried to fill it, nothing worked. She's done things, more terrifying than what happened today in the warehouse. It must have been his eyes. The desperate agony, terrified, begging, and in the end he'd saved her again. She didn't know how but he had. She tried to open her eyes again but they remained in darkness. Fear; crept up her spine, not just any darkness. She was there, she hadn't meant to go...

Hello

The voice purred by her ear.

The water turned liquid, dragging her down, down. Screaming, lungs filling with water. Gasping, air, coughing. Ground; covered in vines, dust floating in the air. Toxic; she vomited covering her mouth with her sleeve.

Billy stood over the bed staring down at the girl lying, motionless on her bed. No one would know what was going on behind those kids but him. He saw her thrashing struggling to breath in the poisonous air of the other side. Strands of hair covered her face. A hand reached out tucking a brown lock to the side. Her eyes flickered under her lids, Withdrawing the hand, leaning down staring at the face of the girl. Black eyes never blinking, head tilting to the side, studying. Strange, dangerous little girl. White teeth glinting in the moonlight with a smirk. Fragile; just to reach out, hands strangling, small body fighting, unable to breath, face turning purple, tongue sticking out, gagging, blood vessels bursting in eyes. His hands twitching, edging closer to the slim, slender neck.

Hands, choked, in time before now, bloody bruised, battered face, pleading. Tiny body, frightening power.

The hands froze; trembling, withdrew again. Such a little body.

The upside down vanished and El could feel the surface coming back, she had control again.

El

El jolted awake, breath fast, stared, saw no one, the curtains fluttered in the breeze. Her hand came up, touching her cheek. She'd dreamt something strange; gentle hands smoothing down her hair. In the moments before she came away from the other place, strange dream, very strange. However something felt wrong, her stomach twisting in strange knots, a sticky discomfort making her pyjama bottoms stick to her. Pulling back the covers, looking down, blood stained the sheets.

Okay so in this chapter, I've decided to tackle some issues that I've had with physical intimacy and issues that I've encountered. personally I've had a rough experience at a young age, but I liked the idea of playing on some of these issues with El, I feel like as she had such a different childhood (growing up as a lab rat) that physical intimacy normal children grow up with from their family won't have been there, so she'd be a bit more reluctant in my opinion.

4. Chapter 4

Okay here it is! I've got a clear aim for this story, I don't want it to be longer than ten chapters, even though I could write about these guys forever! I just realistically don't have that time in my life, and I'll have times where updates might not happen for months! So I want to do this as a complete work, and satisfy you lovely readers.

Enjoy.

El stumbled out of her room, muscle contractions forcing her to hunch, curl inwards, groaning. Pain; very painful. Needed Joyce, yes, Joyce would be able to help.

The woman, sat at the table, staring into the pages of a book, eyes still, clearly not reading the words.

Flare of pain inside; El buckled and whined. Joyce looked up eyes wide and concerned, dashing over.

"Sweetie you okay?"

"Bleeding,"

"Bleeding ? Where?"

El motioned towards her legs, Joyce's eyes widened, seeing the stain. "Come with me honey, let's get to the bathroom."

"What to do?" El moaned relying heavily on her adoptive mothers support. The pain curled and spiked forcing a quick gasp from her lips.

"Well," Joyce squeezed her shoulder, guiding the younger girl, into the bathroom and towards the bath, "first we're going to clean you up, get some fresh clothes," El watched, grimacing every time the pain curled like fist around her insides, as the older woman moved around the bathroom, running the taps to fill the tub with steaming water. Joyce opened the cupboard under the sink pulling out a box with small square packages and handing one of these to El. "When

you're all clean, I'll show you how to put this in the lining of your knickers," at El's very confused expression, she added "it's to catch the blood," then chuckled at the curiously baffled expression. The expression changed swiftly with another pained groan. "Okay let's get you out of these dirty clothes and into the bath. Warmth helps relax the muscles."

"Hurts,"

"I know honey, here let me, that's it nice and easy." El slipped under the water and melted as the heat seeped through her muscles and bones. The tight knot just above her pelvic bone unfurled and eased, it still hurt but it was more subdued.

The water rippled, lapping over her skin in soothing waves. El slipped further down into the bathtub letting the water reach under her chin. A warm cocoon. Eyes closed; steam rising body relaxing down, down, down. When Joyce coaxed her from the bath it was with a soft towel, fresh clothes and a hot water bottle. Showing her how to put the pad into the lining of her knickers.

The sofa never felt so amazing in the early hours of the morning as it did now. El lay curled around the hot water bottle leaching out the heat into her core, ensconced in pillows and the softest blanket Joyce could find, a hot cup of cocoa balanced on her knees. The stairs creaked.

"Hey," the sleepy voice of Will entering the living room. The two women were curled up on the sofa watching reruns of 'that 70s show' El looked up at her brother, a look of such self pity written over her fine features had Will frowning. "What's wrong?"

Joyce smiled kindly "it's a girl thing,"

"Oh,"

"Bleeding," El said gravely.

"Right,"

Joyce beckoned him over to sit with them. The three of them curled up together, warm, cosy, soft; family. El closed her eyes Joyce a

motherly embrace on her left, Will a solid comfort on her right.

There are always moments of peace in times of war. And for once, the war left them alone for a few hours, until the morning.

The morning came, and with it the rest of the gang. Noisy, loud and frantic.

They were planning another way to fight the Mindflayer.

"He could still be at the factory?" Nancy pitched in to the shaking of heads,

"Na," Steve shook his head pushing his hair back, "he will find a new place, that ones not safe for him now we know that he's there,"

"It could be a double bluff," Dustin glanced from one to the other, "you know, make us think that he's changed locations when he's actually still in the same place, while we run in circles looking for a phantom?"

"How do you even come up with these ideas?" Lucas scrunched his face up, "ow!" Max pinched his arm.

"It's better than any idea you've come up with so far."

Will wondered why all the planning to save the world as they knew it, had to happen at his house? It didn't seem to matter that the house was now a different one, in a different state. Though he continued to add his thoughts to the matter all the same. Mike cut off mid way through another possible plan, when El sloped into the kitchen, opening the fridge completely ignoring the planning going on around her, she took out a chocolate bar and trudged back to the living room.

"What's up with her?" Lucas waved a hand frowning at Mike.

"I don't know," he defended.

"Women's stuff," Will filled in helpfully. All of the boys at the table suddenly looked very uncomfortable, Dustin seemed unfazed however, just scoffing at the idiots he called friends.

"oh get over it," he sighed with exasperation.

El collapsed onto the sofa, lethargic, she had never felt so tired and drained from something other than using her powers too much. She couldn't use them today, a pounding headache prevented the most simple of functions. Going to the toilet, for example, was hell. Peeling the wrapper on the chocolate bar away, snapping a piece off, letting it melt on her tongue. Her chest felt constricted in an odd way. Not quite physical, and not quite emotional. The sensation ran deeper than that, inside, in her soul.

Something wasn't right. The feeling twisted inside her, turning bones to lead, insides to glass. A sense of, Something else, existing within her. Shifting; uncomfortable, maybe another hot water bottle would help?

El sat contemplatively chewing on the sugary treat. The unease may have been to do with her and Mike, and what happened the other night. An unspoken trust, an innocent trust had been snapped, clean in two.

Not so innocent now. The voice inside her head chided. Silly, all people grew up. Not her, no, she didn't want to grow up. Not like other people.

Sitting on the sofa, hands pulling at the loose thread in her sleeve, listening as Max talked, chewing the chocolate. Not just Max, all of them were talking, gathered around the table. Planning. To hunt; to hunt down Billy. That didn't feel right. The feeling inside curled and constricted, joined by a tight fist in her pelvis. With a hiss she pushed herself up, shuffling into the kitchen once more.

Before she could reach the kettle, Nancy flicked the switch for it to boil. Will standing ready with the rabbit cover hot water bottle. She smiled, the most appreciative smile her body sagging into a chair Dustin pulled out without blinking, and waited for the kettle to ding. A big hand gently ruffled her already messy hair, Steve smiled down at her, another chocolate bar in hand. Tears pricked her eyes, sniffing she accepted the chocolate, hurling herself at his waist to hug him as tightly as she possibly could.

"Wow!" Steve staggered, "you're welcome."

"What's happening?" Lucas and Mike asked in unison.

"Hormones," Dustin supplied, ever the master of all knowledge. "Can we please get back to business?"

El was only half aware of the planning happening around her. She only wanted the beautiful warmth of that bunny hot water bottle, pressed firmly against her stomach as she curled under that heavenly blanket on the sofa; bliss. Nancy took the kettle when it was boiled and filled the object of El's desires, with the boiling liquid. The conversation caught her attention again when she heard her name.

"If it wasn't for El, we'd all be dead meat!" Lucas; Earnest, but that was wrong though. Didn't they understand? A deep frown creased her brow.

"we're lucky she managed to drop the roof on him." No no no! Didn't they understand? Eyes darting left and right; searching their faces. Surely not all of them believed that it was all her? The conversation went on, the debate about El, what to do with Billy. How dangerous he was. Until she could no longer take it. The feeling inside her growing and overflowing until she could not bare it a second longer! They needed to know!

"Not me," the table was silent as El glared at them all over the top of the fluffy rabbit ears, staring unwavering into all the shocked eyes. "Billy stopped it."

"El," Nancy started to speak but one look from the girl stopped the words in her throat.

"Billy saved, again. I am not letting him hurt." She rose to her feet, hot water bottle clutched tightly in her grip, and turned on her heel, storming out as quickly and violently as she could manage.

"What's up with her?" Lucas accused.

"Hormones," Dustin replied as though it was the most obvious think in existence.

Max scoffed and followed after her best friend. Throwing a reproachful glare over her shoulder as she exited the kitchen.

"You okay?" Max sank into the plush sofa next to the agitated girl. If she were a cat she would have been hissing and spitting, with how clearly the suppressed anger rolled off of her.

"Not sure," El shifted, getting the hot water bottle into a better position. "No."

"What's wrong other than the obvious," Max waved at her general countenance; curled up around the ball of liquid heat under a blanket with a very firm frown on her brow.

"There's a feeling inside,"

"Well-"

"No, not that," cut her off, knowing that she was going to say something about her physical state.

"Then?" Max pressed.

"Here," pressing a hand to her chest, El clutched her jumper into a fist. "It's tight, curling, cruel, sad, so desperately sad and yet... it's so full, so full it hurts," she turned pleading eyes on the redhead, begging for understanding. Confused; Max took her hand and squeezed it.

"I don't understand," she smiled sadly.

"I don't," El fumbled. "It doesn't feel like me," she searched her friends face, "strange?"

"I think with the lives we live, anything is possible. Does it feel bad? Evil?"

"No," El hunched in more on herself, "it just feels really, sad."

Billy stared into the reflection. Black veins pulsating below skin, black eyes glistening in the fluorescent lights. The voice inside controlling, urged him to hunt; to find that girl again and rip her into

tiny pieces. He didn't want that though. No, not her, not the girl that listened, that found him. Heat, this thing hated heat, heat hurt it. Quick; before the thing found out! the cooler control panel of the factory was smashed, crumbled under his fist. His body stopped, frozen as he strained for the lock, trying to close the once freezer, now turned furnace.

Splitting in half from the inside; the shadow pulling one way, him the other. Inch my inch, scream after scream torn from throat, as his hand gripped the deadlock door and slammed in closed. Impossible to open from the inside. Laughter; outraged screams, crashing together from the same lungs. Time to wait; the heat would build, then it would die.

Max left El to join the rest of their party. She felt uneasy, El wasn't acting like herself. First she broke up with Mike, what even was all that about? She needed to have a talk with her, a real talk. When all of this had calmed down and they had won again; which they would! She firmly believed, she had to. Billy... her brother. She'd just got him back and now all of this was happen. Max saw El get up from the sofa and head upstairs.

El's mind wondered for a time here and there until it settled down at last. If any of her friends knew she was doing this on her own, they would fry her with the new chip fryer Lucas had bought. She sat, legs crossed on her bed, the now slightly cooler hot water bottle nestled against her stomach with a pillow firmly keeping it in place. She closed her eyes, blindfold wrapped around head. And waited.

The darkness was infinite, no way to tell time. Her real body sitting on her bed, could still feel the cotton covers; hear, the sounds of her friends all moving downstairs faded into the background as she fell down, down, down

It was a risk, a dangerous one, but if she could find Billy, know for sure where he was and what was happening, it would be worth the ire from her family. Maybe she could stop him from being hurt?...

El stared at the vision before her, a body slumped against a wall, breath failing, immense heat over taking. The eyes found her. Moving back, to keep away. The eyes were blue, not black.

"Billy?"

The eyes blinked, the head, fell forward, the body slumped down into a pile on the floor.

Dying; too much heat, hurting him. Save, save! SAVE!

A voice; cruel, cruel voice echoed inside the mind. laughing. Billy was laughing, no he was screaming. Screaming; pain! PAIN! The darkness shook, water rippling; splashing over her feet. Waves growing, higher, higher. Splashing at the waist now. Pushing her back away from the man crippled, in pain, the man that needed her. He needed her! Reaching; she can't get him. Reaching; his hand extended. Obscured, swallowed; a wave crashing over her head, washing her away in a hurricane current.

The visage of the girl vanished, her hand outstretched, before flickering into nothing. Sweat, ran down skin. Throat dry; need water, no, can't get water. Going to die. Good, take him with you. Die.

But that girl, El, she could help? Yes tell her where and then she can help! No!

Billy clamped his hands over his ears, digging his nails into his skin, drawing blood. No! No! No! He would not tell her where, he can't get her! The shadow can't get her!

The walls radiated heat, he wanted to run away from them! He wanted to press against them, burn the shadow away! Billy crawled to the wall. Screamed as he pressed his face against it.

Dustin gripped the table as the whole house shook. Everyone stood up were thrown off balance and fell down, pictures crashed off the walls.

"Shit!" Steve shielded Max and Nancy from falling plates frying from the kitchen cupboards.

El came crashing out of her bedroom. She was angry. She could feel the chill rolling up her spine. She collided with Will half way down the stairs, thrown left and right as the very ground shook. Will was

pale, shivering as she gripped him for support.

"Billy?" He gasped.

"He's burning!" El was frantic, eyes wide.

Yep! That's all for this one! You'll have to write a review, to remind me that there are people who still want to read this

5. Chapter 5

So I know it's a bit shorter than the others, but this is a much as I could think of for this chapter and it seemed a good ending where it came to.

The earth shook, he felt it, quivering up his body; shaking his bones to near breaking. Screaming; he was screaming. Walls cracked, crumbled. he laughed. He'd won, Billy wanted to cry, he was crying. Screaming, crying. He'd lost. Agony; his body splitting apart, his mind shattering. The body began to move. The crack in the wall, under palm placed there. The wall dissolved into dust. He laughed. The mind reached out, racing over fields, roads, houses. Focused on one house, three cars outside, inside people. Not her, not him, not her...

Evil; the smile splitting his face in two. The ice cold, clear blue eyes turned completely black. The black veins protruding from his skin pulsating with anticipation.

"found you," he purred.

El screamed. The voice inside her head, laughing. Vision fading. Pain inside exploding. Collapsing down onto the floor; holding her head, tears flowing, blood collecting on upper lip. Howling sobs, clutching her head. Splitting pain slicing her in two. She collapsed onto her knees.

Pandemonium; everyone moving at once.

"El!" Mike lunged toward her, another scream tore from her throat and Mike flew back, everyone flew back; crashing into the walls, the fridge, the kitchen surfaces. Ceramic smashed, windows, shattered. Spider web cracks clawed up the walls.

"What the hell is happening!" Steve crawled across the floor. The whole house shook, the cracks spreading up along the ceiling like lighting strikes.

"She's going to take the whole house down!" Jonathan lunged for Nancy, pulling her to him, a chunk of plaster came free, smashing to pieces where the woman had been.

"Yeah and us with it!" Dustin's eyes were wide. "shit!"

"El!" Mike still tried to reach out to the girl. Something warm ran down to his jaw, blood trickled from his ears, a pounding headache, his vision going blurry. Max; pulling a hand away from the side of her head saw the red liquid there, looked at the others. Oh, oh shit.

"Come on!" she tore at Lucas's jacket urging him on "We need to get out!"

"El snap out of it!" Will screamed, terrified. Mike's body lay motionless, limp in his hold as he dragged the smaller boy away. She kept screaming.

She didn't hear them, she couldn't see them, she felt nothing. Only the ice cold hand squeezing her head tighter, tighter.

"Now, what did I say about letting us stay?"

No!

"And killing all of your friends?"

No!

The hold on her head vanished. She was blind, deaf, senseless. The feel of a hand gripping her arm; everything rushing back, so intense it hurt, excruciating. She nearly threw up. She wasn't, in the house, she was in the dark. The void, on the water.

Hand; there was a hand on her arm. The hand had an arm, the arm a body, the body a face.

"I don't have much time," Billy grimaced, pain, plain as the sun, twisting and contorting his handsome face. Pretty; he was pretty. El stared up at him; dazed, disoriented.

"Billy..?" her voice was thick, tongue heavy. Half of his face was an

angry, painful looking red. The urge to reach out and sooth the burn, strong; she reached a hand out. Stopped mid reach by his terrified eyes. Why was he scared? She didn't remember...

"He knows where you are," a cry of sudden agony, his knees buckled, his grip bruisingly tight. Gasping he managed the rest of his message. "You need to get away-" he screamed falling into the water, writhing, veins turning black. Body moving; instinct, she took hold of his face in her hands, trying to still him, fighting his thrashing. He was slipping away! Light fading. What could she do? Something! She had to do something!

"Billy!" voice commanding, demanding him back, she would not let him go. In the void her voice echoed. He stilled, eyes clearing, light returning, black veins stopping. Wide doe eyes gazing up to hers, lost. "I will save you."

She was crying, tears rolling down onto his cheeks, "I promise."

Staring; lost soul to lost soul. Head nodding; fraction of a movement, before his body tensed and he dissolved into smoke. Solid, smoke, nothing, gone. Billy was gone. El sagged back, onto her heels. The salt tears continued. The feeling inside that wasn't hers tightened, into a knot heavy beneath her breast. The feeling of something else... someone else. They were scared, so scared and alone. She, cried, not all the tears were hers.

Hands covering mouth, Nancy stood in the road. They'd fled twenty feet from the house before it collapsed. They hadn't seen El come out. Max; sobbing, Lucas holding her tight. Dustin; silent, too shocked to speak, all blood from his face washed away to a pale pallor. Will; still holding Mike, as Jonathan shook him to wake up. Steve sat, staring, just staring.

"What now?" his voice croaked.

"She could be okay?" Nancy wished more than thought.

"Okay? A whole shitting house fell on her,"

Hairs; pricking. Will moved his hand, touched the back of his neck.

Chill running up his spine. He turned. A figure in the distance, walking in the middle of the road, towards them.

"Eer, guys?" he tried to get their attention. Whomever was walking towards them ambled along the road. Calm. Sedate. Deadly. The chill turned to ice, freezing all of Will's insides. "Guys!" they all looked, saw.

"Run!"

"what about El!"

"EL!"

Her vision swam back from the void, clouded with dust. Something heavy crushing her lungs; she looked, a beam pinning her to the ground. The house? What happened? The ruin of a building, unstable, still crumbling. She shifted that small movement caused an avalanche of debris to shower over her. Screaming as something sharp crushed her left leg. Reaching out with her one free hand, the over dislocated at the shoulder under her back at a wickedly odd angle, she focused. The beam twitched, groaned, didn't move. Her powers worn out, a bad battery. Biting into her upper lip, a sob wrecked her, as the pain fully registered to her whole body. In the distance she could hear faint voices. She tried to call out; dust coated her lungs, choking, only a rasp of sound came forth. Trying to look and see beyond the rubble cocooning her inside the death trap.

The dust and grit started to lift up in what could have been the breeze. Then rubble started to float up; lifting away from her body. Piece by piece coming away from her battered and broken form. Through the madness a figure walked towards her, stepping over rock stone and brick. She moaned. No, no, no.

The Mindflayer looked through Billy's eyes at her, scanning her slowly, grinning inhumanly wide.

"Not going anywhere now are we?"

Her insides twisted growing cold with dread, it seeped into her bones, making her feel heavy. "Hummm," the monster tilted Billy's

head assessing her closer. "out of those nasty little powers?" a large hand snaked out.

El screamed as she was lifted roughly by her hair into the air. She would have kicked punched, bit anything, but her legs dangled uselessly broken, her left arm hung limp. She could only clutch at the rough hand fisted in her dust clouded hair with her right hand. Clawing desperately. Eyes begging. She'd reached him before. She tried to do it again, boring her eyes into the fatherless darkness.

"Billy...?" she saw only cold hard death.

"Billy boy's not home,"

Salty fat tears tracked through the dirt on her cheeks, she couldn't help the sobbing. the lower half of her face smeared with blood and snot.

Something started to slither into her mind, probing into every corner, behind every closed door, places she'd never dared venture. She was ripped open stripped naked of all barriers, and laid bare to the view of this monster. Flayed, that's what they called them. Accurate, her skin might as well have been sliced away leaving her insides to spill into the desolated house foundations. It slithered inside turning her over and laying all of her fears hopes dreams desires to the light of day. There was nothing he didn't find. Nothing. She was in the lab again powerless, nothing. Curled in a corner. A pinned butterfly. A wave of rage crashed into her. He was angry. Something was stopping him from entering her body. The hand in her hair tightened and shook her.

El whined, terrified.

"Why!" his black gaze pinned her down, she wanted to shrink to dissolve into nothing.

"I don't know..." The pressure inside her head increased, she sobbed and howled in agony. Something else was being investigated. El watched Billy's face, searching for the man within. He must be somewhere, please. The force within her chest gripped something under her sternum And yanked. The scream ripped from within her;

shattering, her very soul invaded.

"I'll release the boy if you let me in."

El stared up, bowed, bent, broken. He'd let billy go? Impossible.

"Possible." he smiled, a cruel expression. She stared; not trusting this monster. But... a small voice inside whispered; Pulling her together.

"Promise?" childish to promise, but she was a child still, inside, he had uncovered that, along with everything else. She was tiny, small, insignificant. A tiny being in an ocean of cruelty, pain and suffering. Billy's face contorted horrifically; the monster within manipulating the muscles. It growled. As close to a promise as she was going to get.

"Okay," her voice broke half way through the word. The last wall came down within her; one she didn't even know was there. Submerged in a sea of ice, plunged into fire. Suffocating; the shadows burst from Billy's mouth, forcing down her throat, into her lungs, down inside. Crashing within; a storm washing her out.

Death; consuming her. Swallowed whole, by ice, fire! Emptiness; full enough to explode. Then nothing. Dislodged from control; an observer only in her own body. El watched through stolen eyes in a far corner of her mind. Billy's empty body crumpled to the rubble. Bones; broken to fixed with snaps and crutches; reforming, improving; growing stronger. Backward facing limbs swivled back into correct places. Internal bleeding mopped and sealed. Standing on strong legs. Flexing joints.

A laugh; foreign voice using stolen lungs.

"Oh no," Nancy gasped. She'd seen everything. Couldn't stop it. Nor stop the others before they started running. They hadn't seen. She screamed at them to stop, tearing her lungs with her urgency.

"EL!"

"YOU DID IT!"

The others yelled with glee. The elated faces contorted, confused. Skidding to a stop as Nancy screamed. Will looked at the woman then

back to his step sister. She was looking at her hands. Turning them over, studying them.

What?

The telekinetic girl; froze, laughed. A chilling sound. The earth shuddered, birds flew from nests, screeching in flight.

"El?" he didn't want to believe it. El threw her head back bellowing to the sky, arms stretched wide. Trees, ripped up from the roots, the road cracked, split as the earth shifted. Stillness; it all stopped. The head that was once a young girl's snapped towards Will. He saw the black eyes. The black veins. The hairs pricked along his neck. The sinking chill down his spine. She smiled. He smiled. Raised a hand. Black blood flowed from her nose; the sun turned black.

Now don't be worried, I still have more to write. But I do intend to let this story finish after 10 chapters. I have a very clear idea where this is going currently. But I will say... if you can this and by you and mean my beautiful readers! If you want more... I will find it in me to write more. As ever, please leave a review once you've read this. No matter how short or long they always cheer me up and keep my writing fluids going x